



The OVR Review

"To assist Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence"

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Spring 2009

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Article submitted by Dr. David Beach

Program Services Report

RSA Monitoring Visit

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) recently visited Kentucky as part of the year-long monitoring process of OVR performance. RSA is required to conduct period monitoring of state VR agencies by Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The monitoring process is intended to ensure state agency compliance with the provisions of its State Plan and review performance in assisting persons with disabilities in achieving high quality employment and independent living outcomes. The OVR monitoring process began October 1, 2008 when RSA initiated reviews of applicable policies, procedures and performance data.

Seven RSA staff visited Kentucky from March 9-13, conducting meetings in field offices, Central Office and at the Center. During the meetings conducted at Central Office, RSA staff met with OVR executive leadership, program management, advocacy groups and agency partners. During their visits to the field offices and CDPVTC, RSA staff met with counselors from the Owensboro, Bowling Green, Florence, Lexington, West Liberty, Ashland, Whitesburg, Louisville and Middletown offices. In these meetings, counselors presented selected cases from each of their districts that reflected the strengths and barriers of their respective areas and how they utilized available resources.

At the conclusion of the visit, the monitoring team provided OVR with a preliminary list of their initial findings during the monitoring process. The team identified the following as potential strengths of the agency:

- Good team spirit;
- Obvious staff compassion for the people they serve;
- Staff believe in the mission of the agency;
- The manner by which OVR staff implements policies and services;
- The comprehensive needs assessment process;
- Agency and staff willingness to partner with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), One-Stops, mental health and mental retardation services & schools;
- An Eligibility rate of 91% (of decisions made within 60 days);
- The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center
- TRACKS
- The counselor mentoring program;

- Specific branches for supported employment and deaf and hard of hearing services;
- Field staff who are knowledgeable about local labor market areas, market trends and opportunities in their local areas.

RSA staff also identified the Supported Self Employment Program as a potential promising practice. The team identified potential areas related to VR service provision, data management, independent living and fiscal management where the agency may consider reviewing its practices to increase effectiveness and oversight.

The findings presented by RSA in the exit meeting were in draft form and will be revised and formally presented to the agency for review in July in an initial draft report. This report will identify specific recommendations or required corrective actions the agency will need to address. The agency will have the opportunity to respond in writing and the responses will be included in the final report to be published and distributed on or around the end of FFY2009.

Agency leadership would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who assisted in the RSA Monitoring visit. Many staff went above and beyond in representing the agency and profession. On more than one occasion, the monitoring team members remarked at how impressed they were with the energy and professionalism of our staff. Thanks to these efforts, the agency was able to showcase its many assets, assisting RSA in understanding the high level of quality services provided by OVR in its services to persons with disabilities.

In This Issue

Program Services	1
Executive Director	2
Employer Spotlight	3
Employee Spotlight	4
Consumer Spotlight	5
Carl D. Perkins Report	6
News Bits	7 - 8
HRD Report	9
Council Corner	10

Message from Executive Director, Beth Smith



As most of you already know, on February 17, President Obama and the United States House and Senate came together to create the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). We all know it as simply the stimulus package. The crafters of the bill set aside money for all types of programs in order to do four things: spend funds quickly to save and create jobs, improve student achievement through school improvement and reform, ensure transparency, reporting and accountability, and to invest one-time ARRA funds thoughtfully to minimize the budget shortfalls for states.

One of the programs benefiting significantly from the ARRA is Vocational Rehabilitation. The ARRA provides \$540 million for the VR State Grants program. Our share in Kentucky is \$8,013,716. Kentucky OVR has received half of the stimulus money, with the rest coming in the next federal fiscal year.

The ARRA provides an unprecedented opportunity for states and VR agencies to implement innovative strategies to improve employment outcomes

for individuals with disabilities. As of now, it looks as if the majority of the funds in Kentucky will be used to address the revenue shortfall that resulted in budget cuts for KYOVR. We are currently exploring creative ways to spend any additional funding that may be left.

Information about each state's formula allocation is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/recovery.html>.

New OVR Internet Site

Site Easier to Use and More Consistent

In March, the agency remodeled its public website. The new site is fully accessible and easier to navigate. For the first time, all of the agency's policies and procedures are included online. The address for the website remains the same: <http://ovr.ky.gov/>. Please visit and let us know what you think by sending us an e-mail to our general mailbox, WFD.VOCREHAB@ky.gov.



May is Job Placement Month!!!

Every May, the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation celebrates Job Placement Month. During the month, local offices conduct special events to bring attention to job placement efforts. Contact your local office to find out more!

NEW CENTRAL OFFICE ADDRESS:

275 East Main St.
Mail Stop 2E-K
Frankfort, KY 40621

Employer Spotlight Presents Meijer's *Corporation Demonstrates Unique Flexibility*



Trent Altman congratulates Meijer Manager Denny Simonavice on being recognized as an outstanding employer by the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation.

Trent Altman has been an employee at Meijer on Preston Highway in Louisville for over six years. A general merchandising clerk, Trent has found success at learning new tasks and maintaining his job at the store due to the combined efforts of the team leaders, coworkers and, most importantly, Denny Simonavice, the store manager. Seeing value in Trent's abilities while acknowledging challenges posed by his disability has made all the difference in

his success as an employee. What follows are some examples of the unique supports provided by the Meijer's team.

Community Employment, an agency that provides supported employment services, was working with Trent in 2002. His job coach from that agency, Troy Klabor and it's executive director, Barry Whaley, negotiated a unique job arrangement for Trent at Meijer's. Trent was hired along with Jason Williams, Trent's live-in assistant, and they became a team working together. This concept was and still is very unusual and it provided the built-in supports for Trent to learn tasks and be successful on the job. Because Denny Simonavice accepted and approved of this unique idea, a door to employment was opened to Trent.

Throughout the past six-and-a-half years, other coworkers also became involved in working with Trent on certain job tasks. Their efforts were all voluntary and Denny Simonavice supported and approved of the team's participation. His receptiveness paved the way to Trent's success.

Trent has autism. His disability affects and limits his ability for social interaction and using typical expressive communication. Denny Simonavice and the Meijer's team recognized Trent's challenges, yet accepted the supports that allowed Trent to use his strengths. Trent's strengths include strong visual skills, the ability to categorize, the ability to concentrate intensely on a task he knows well, the ability to handle defined tasks

well, physical strength, punctuality and near perfect attendance at work.

Trent was awarded a certificate in February 2007 for five years of dedicated service as an employee. Trent has successfully worked in the Lawn and Garden Department and the Pets Department where he has fed and cared for animals and cleaned cages. He has also stocked shelves. Trent has also worked in the Flower Department with Kathy, a coworker.

Trent's family has seen ample evidence of the Meijer team's acceptance of him on shopping trips with him at the store. On a recent visit, at least 5 different employees approached Trent and expressed appreciation to the family for his efforts as an employee. The family has also heard how Trent has inspired and motivated others.

In 2007, corporate policy at Meijer changed and required that every employee know how to do all the tasks across departments, such as use the cash register. This presented an obstacle for Trent in keeping his job. Denny Simonavice obtained corporate approval to allow Trent to maintain the job tasks he already had and continue working with team support.

Meijer's unique acceptance of an individual's capabilities and recognition of his challenges has been a model of job carving to enable Trent's success. Meijer on Preston Highway in Louisville has employed other individuals with autism in addition to Trent. Denny Simonavice and his team deserve recognition for their efforts. As Denny Simonavice recently said: "Trent is a legacy to all of us here at Meijer."

* * * * *

Trent Altman is also an award winning juried artist through the Kentucky Arts Council. Denny Simonavice provided an exhibit wall of Trent's art from 2004 to 2006 at the store. Trent sells his artwork in prints and cards. Examples of his work can be seen below. For more information, visit <https://ssl.nshosts.com/independenceboundcom/clickcart1/>.



Employee Spotlight Presents Charlie Crigger

"It's been a Great Ride for Me"



Charlie Crigger

When Charlie Crigger, branch manager of the West Liberty district, reflects on his more than thirty-year career with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, he speaks intensely and passionately. He can talk at length about the effect vocational rehabilitation services can have on the lives of Kentuckians and can provide plenty of examples. He can also talk about the effect the agency has had on him. "It's been a great ride for me. It has opened a world of opportunity. I've had fun"

Charlie was born and raised in Paintsville and his career in state government has enabled him to stay in his beloved Eastern Kentucky. After graduating from Morehead State University with a dual major in Psychology and Political Science in 1972, Charlie was employed by the mental health center in his hometown. After two years, he transferred to the mental health center in Ashland. In 1977, after obtaining a Master's degree in Education, Charlie went to work for vocational rehabilitation services at the Carl D. Perkins Comprehensive Rehabilitation Center in the counseling department. While there, he also worked in the learning lab. After fifteen

years at the center, Charlie transferred to the field as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, hired by long-time regional administrator Jack Cline to cover Lawrence County out of the Ashland office. Two years later, he transferred to the Paintsville office and has worked in the West Liberty district ever since. Interested in management, Charlie became a Kentucky Certified Public Manager in 2004. He obtained his Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling in 2006 and passed the examination to become a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), one of the proudest accomplishments of his career. Charlie became manager of the West Liberty district in 2007 after Larry Hoskins retired.

As the manager of the West Liberty district, Charlie works to foster a team-oriented work environment. "I have a really good staff," Charlie says, "everyone works together well." Although there are designated mentors in the district, the mentoring does not stop there. All of the experienced staff members pitch in to help with new staff when they come on board. Everyone does what they can to help."

Charlie does not assign separate budgets to counselors. Instead, there is one overall district budget that everyone draws from. The budget is reviewed and discussed thoroughly at every staff meeting. There is a lot of give and take and some discussions are "a hoot," but the end result is buy-in for everyone. The process "keeps us focused," says Charlie, "It works for us. We really like it."

If you ask Charlie what has changed in vocational rehabilitation over the years, he will talk about how the agency does a better job of training staff today, particularly when preparing new staff for their positions. He speaks highly of the agency's mentoring program, "our ace in the hole," as a factor in this improved preparation of new staff, giving them a better understanding of the program. Mentoring is obviously important to Charlie and he credits Ernie Pennington, now retired, as being his mentor when his career in vocational rehabilitation began.

Another difference Charlie sees in vocational rehabilitation today is the increased and enhanced resources available to counselors. There are more things to help the counselor on the job. Rehabilitation technology, supported employment and job placement services are only some of the additional resources that enable the agency to serve more individuals with significant disabilities.

Charlie loves management, but misses the daily contact with consumers and seeing the difference vocational rehabilitation services can make in their lives. He uses as an example of helping a single parent to obtain a degree that will enable her to go from welfare to earning over \$20 an hour as a nurse.

Charlie is an avid golfer although shoulder problems have severely limited his playing time over the last couple of years. He holds a real estate license and is also licensed as a real estate appraiser. Charlie and his wife, Kathy, have one daughter, Mackenzie, who just returned from a two year stint as an English teacher in Japan. Recently taking up a new hobby, he identifies himself as 'a fisherman in training.'



As the manager of the West Liberty district, Charlie works hard to foster a team-oriented work environment. "I have a really good staff," Charlie says, "everyone works together well."

Consumer Spotlight

Success Story for the RCD District

Delbert Caldwell has seen his share of difficulties finding employment. Born and raised in Adair County, he has faced the barriers of living in a small town where opportunities are scarce. As a person who is deaf, he has also faced a communication barrier. Add the reality of a stagnant economy and you will have a picture of what Delbert has been struggling with for a large portion of his life. Delbert's determination, however, wouldn't allow him to give up his dream of working.

With many companies down-sizing recently and with a record number of lay-offs, the competition for employment is fiercer than ever. In spite of this, Delbert's perseverance and some help from Vocational Rehabilitation have paid off. Delbert and his counselor, Joe Scott, the Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf for Adair County, together developed what would become a successful plan to address the issues he encountered.

First, OVR helped bridge the communication barriers. Joe himself was able to talk to Delbert directly through his knowledge of sign language, enabling him to gather the information he needed to better serve him. Delbert also needed to communicate with the local service providers and employers. The OVR Interpreter Staff, headed by Judy Gooch, played a tremendous role in making this happen. Ruth Bradley, OVR Interpreter for the Deaf for the area, teamed with Joe in handling many of the communication issues that Delbert faced. She was able to pull in other OVR staff interpreters, as well as freelance interpreters, in order to be sure that all aspects were covered and that the Delbert's individual rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were respected.

Now that Delbert was able to overcome the barrier of communication, the next steps were securing a job and making sure the right accommodations were in place. During one of Delbert's appointments with Joe, he mentioned a job lead at the new Wal-Mart being built. Joe accompanied Delbert to the Wal-Mart to meet the management and talk to them about Delbert and how OVR could assist in his employment transition. The Wal-Mart staff were very receptive. When Delbert got the call for an interview, the OVR Interpreter Staff was there to support him. He was accompanied by the OVR Interpreter throughout his training period and was able to receive the support needed to become an excellent member of the Wal-Mart staff. Delbert secured a full time position with Wal-Mart of Columbia, KY in the produce department.

There, Delbert works both independently and on a team to complete his daily tasks.

After beginning his employment, Delbert quickly realized that he was having some discomfort from being on his feet for long periods. Joe immediately referred him for an evaluation and a bone spur was discovered. The interpreter worked with the doctor to insure a proper evaluation. The issue was easily resolved with some custom shoe inserts that the doctor recommended and the agency purchased. Delbert is now able to work without discomfort, enabling him to be as effective as others on his team.

With assistance from an agency's rehabilitation technologist, further accommodations are being arranged so that Delbert can send and receive text messages from within the Wal-Mart store. This will allow management or coworkers to convey information and instructions in a timely manner to him since he cannot hear the overhead intercom system. Other alerting and assistive devices have been provided by OVR to help him manage his daily routine and work schedule. These include a vibrating and flashing alert system at home that includes an alarm clock, a door-bell and video phone connections. This has helped him with his independence and availability.

OVR is in process of collaborating with Wal-Mart in order to get a video phone set up at the work site so that Delbert could arrange some of his needs by calling from the store through a Video Relay Interpreter or by direct face-to-face communication, using sign language through the Video Phone Service to another person. The equipment, provided by Sorenson VRS, only requires connecting to the store's existing high speed internet connection.

This situation illustrates the broad spectrum of services that the agency can offer. Though job placement is the ultimate goal, all OVR employees understand that employment is just the "Cherry on Top" and that everything else involves many hours of meeting, planning, coordinating, collaborating, assessing, evaluating, advocating, and then moving forward with what it takes to achieve the ultimate goal. Without the hard work of the counselor, rehabilitation, technologist and sign language interpreters, the dreams of people like Delbert Caldwell would not be achievable. Fortunately for Delbert, his dream of employment has been realized.

Delbert's next hope is that his wife, who is also deaf, will become the next one to fulfill her dream. OVR is assisting her as well.

CDPVTC Report

Sharing Hope



Twelve Step Programs have a tradition of anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and other electronic media. This article is contributed by CDPVTC staff on behalf of individuals who would prefer to remain anonymous. Home

communities and other identifying information have been withheld.

One of the principal difficulties students encounter as they complete their training at CDPVTC, is the problem of finding work in an area that has the array of other services needed to maintain good health and to provide opportunities for growth. P's story would help students prepare for their future more realistically. Recently, he returned to the center to share his story with current students. P had looked forward to the opportunity to make the trip back to Thelma ever since a center staff member had invited him a few weeks before.

P began his talk by making the group aware of his primary disabilities. P has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and alcoholism, although he enjoys the benefits of long term recovery from the latter. "I didn't believe that I would ever make it in life, didn't think I had a chance at being my own person. My PTSD symptoms were pretty severe and they caused me to be hospitalized a few times while I was here." A dominant feature of PTSD can be intrusive thoughts and memories with such intensity that one may actually see events similar to what one previously experienced. P said, "I had pretty low self-esteem. I was sure I wouldn't even be able to complete my training. Harmon Leedy (Center staff member, now deceased) believed in me and told me I could make it. He always had time to talk to me. He wouldn't let me give up." P credits a combination of good counseling services, medication, and participation in mutual help programs with his success in graduating from the Building Maintenance training program. "I didn't trust people very much, and I had questions about a lot of things. I was able to get answers for those questions. People treated me with respect and answered my questions. Gradually, I learned to trust."

"When I graduated, I moved back home." P had a mentor from the mutual help program, a person whom he trusted. "I wasn't going to be able to support myself in my home area, I was going nowhere—no jobs." P says that his mentor and his vocational rehabilitation counselor finally convinced him that he would not find

work and the other array of opportunities that he needed in the local area. With their encouragement, he decided to move to another part of the state. I was really scared, but I moved. I found a job I really like. I started going to meetings. I found a psychiatrist who I can talk to." P chose a new mentor from persons who went to local meetings. "Gradually, I started trusting him more. I talk to both of them (the psychiatrist and the mentor) when I get upset about something."

He moved into an area where he knew no one and made his way to meetings early in order to meet people. He started taking on commitments at meetings in order "to share what I found. I have to give it away to keep what I have found." His friend, J, who accompanied him to the center, said, "I go with him sometimes and there isn't a place we go that he doesn't know at least half the people."

P continued: "I work for a real estate company doing building maintenance, just what I was trained to do. I really like my work. And they really like me. I have been there two and a half years; and the last two Christmases they have given me big bonuses." P's work is part time for that company. He is not working the next few weeks, as his boss is on vacation. "So, I have found me a job to fill the time while the boss is gone—and that is what I do, whenever I can."

A listener asked P, "What about a phone, and a car?" He answered, "I don't need a phone, and I use my neighbor's phone in an emergency. And I never lack for ways to get around—people are good about giving me rides, but most of the time I can use public transportation."

Finally, one of the listeners asked P to rate his 'life satisfaction' on a ten point scale, "Before you came to the Center, and now." "Before I came to the Center, I didn't have much hope that my life was going anywhere, and I'd give it a 4, I guess. Since coming to the Center, my life is about a 7.5 or an 8. I get a lot of satisfaction out of having my own place. I can have folks over to watch a movie, or for a meal. I have a job I like. I have good friends. There's always room for improvement—but I really like my life now, and I owe it all to the Center and people like Harmon and to my other therapists and counselors."

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center is grateful to P, and his friend J, for taking their time to make such a meaningful visit to the Center, and for sharing their hopeful vision of the future with our students.

NEWS BITS

874K Event Draws Hundreds

On Thursday, February 5, the United 874K Coalition held its annual Legislative Luncheon at the Frankfort Convention Center. Over 800 individuals with disabilities, advocates and service providers attended this year's event. The program consisted of nine individual stories of disability, a video from Governor Steven Beshear, and comments from House Speaker Greg Stumbo and First Lady, Jane Beshear.

The Governor sent his address to the crowd via videotape because he was touring winter storm-ravaged areas of the state with the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In his comments, the Governor said: "As I have pledged to you, it is critical that we commit to improving the lives of all people... I appreciate your enthusiasm and your dedication to creating greater opportunities and empowering individuals all across the Commonwealth... Together we will make a difference."

House Speaker Greg Stumbo, told the crowd: "...I promise you, as long as my colleagues allow me to serve in this role, as long as the good people of my county send me down here, I will never ever turn my back on those who need help nor those who need to be educated."

First Lady Jane Beshear represented the Governor and delivered a proclamation declaring February 5 'United 874K Day' in Kentucky. As she said, he 'cared to send the very best.' She also said: "It's no surprise to any of you that this administration inherited a difficult budget situation and it has continued to get worse, but I can assure you that services for individuals with disabilities are a priority in the Beshear administration."

The bulk of the program was the presentations of nine individuals on their personal experience with disability. The presenters were either individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities. They highlighted their successes, but focused mostly on the continuing needs of people with disabilities, including the need for continued funding of Medicaid programs, enhanced funding of the Hart Supported Living Program, more mental health services and improved special education services, among others. One speaker, Donna MacDonell spoke very highly of vocational rehabilitation services. She told the gathering: "I will also be eternally grateful to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for all of their assistance through the years. They have assisted us with Amy's

(daughter) needs for the years she has been in college. They have given her educational assistance, money for books, hand controls for her car and found ways to assist Amy through the many trials and tribulations of college. They provided much needed encouragement to reach her goal of one day being a hospital chaplain. She graduates in May from

Transylvania College and will attend Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in the fall. Voc rehab was also a great resource for my husband through the years since his motor vehicle accident in 1979."

Dr. Sheila Schuster, the director of the United 874K Coalition and the head of the Advocacy Action Network, was the master of ceremonies for the program. She repeatedly urged the crowd to express their support to their elected officials for an increase in the cigarette tax to partially offset state revenue shortfalls and avoid any cuts in services.



SCVR Council member, John Riesenbergh and Christine Czechorski attend the 2009 874K Event in Frankfort, KY on Thursday, February 5, 2009



NEWS BITS *Continued*

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Process Continues

Since last summer, the agency has been conducting a comprehensive needs assessment in the state. Such an assessment is required every three years as part of the state plan to be submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Data for the needs assessment has been collected primarily through surveys. The main survey was made available to the public via the agency's website, through local offices and by request. Counselors, other OVR staff, community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) staff and one-stop managers have been provided separate surveys.

A total of 741 individuals responded to the public survey. Of that number, 35.2% were individuals with disabilities, 32.5% identified themselves as service providers, 18.9% were parents or guardians of individuals with disabilities, 6.5% were advocates and the remaining 6.9% identified themselves only as members of the general public. Respondents to all surveys were asked to identify the most needed vocational rehabilitation services from a comprehensive list of services and the primary barriers to employment from another list.

Post-employment services and job placement services were identified as the most needed services, followed by supported employment and benefits planning. The biggest barriers to employment identified through the surveys were the slowing economy, employer attitudinal barriers, transportation and disability benefit programs. The surveys also found a continuing need for more community rehabilitation programs and a need for more cross training between agency and one-stop center staff.

The agency is now developing a strategic plan based on the findings of the needs assessment, obtaining input from staff, stakeholders and the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR). The Executive Leadership Team is currently finalizing goals and objectives for the strategic plan which will be presented to the SCVR in June.

Results of Employee Satisfaction Survey

Last fall, the agency completed an employee satisfaction survey with agency staff. More than two thirds of the staff completed it. The results of the

survey were generally very positive. Three out of four employees rated their job satisfaction '4' or '5' on a scale of 5. Four out of five employees reported enjoying their work and found their work 'stimulating and interesting.' Nine of ten employees rated 'empowering persons with disabilities' a satisfying component of their work.

The survey also indicated some dissatisfaction with pay and with 'bureaucratic process'. In fact, 'bureaucratic process' was the most cited 'least satisfying aspect' of the job. In addition to less process and more pay, other needs identified by employees included more staff, smaller caseload sizes, and more opportunities for advancement.

Project STEP

The Summer Transition Enhancement Program (STEP) is a collaborative project between Eastern Kentucky University, the Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. STEP is a unique program designed to provide students who are deaf or hard of hearing an opportunity to experience some of the challenges encountered when entering a university, community or technical college. Participants engage in a variety of activities while staying in campus dormitories throughout the week!

STEP will be held on June 13 - 20 at Eastern Kentucky University. For more information please contact Cindy Downey by telephone at 859-622-2568 or 859-539-2703 or via e-mail at cindy.downey@eku.edu.

Visitors at CDPVTC

Paintsville/Johnson Co. Chamber of Commerce



The Paintsville/Johnson County Chamber of Commerce held an afterhours meeting at the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center and toured the facility on March 26, 2009.

Ex-Offender Training

On March 4 - 5, the agency conducted a training on "Outcome Enhancement for Ex-Offender Consumers" for job placement specialists, substance abuse specialists and branch managers at Lake Cumberland State Resort Park in Jamestown. The main presenter was Mark Johnson, Reentry Coordinator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Monticello. He discussed the Second Chance Act, reentry issues for offenders and job placement strategies for this population, among other things. Other presenters were Rebecca Light from Kentucky Probation and Parole and Andrea Simpson, a public defender, both from Somerset, OVR staff Julie Wade, rehabilitation counselor in Somerset, and Todd Hines, job placement specialist in Richmond. It was a good opportunity for the staff to enhance their knowledge and improve their skills to increase success rates for consumers with criminal records.



"Outcome Enhancement for Ex-Offenders" training was held for job OVR job placement specialists, district substance abuse specialists and field managers on March 4th and 5th at Lake Cumberland State Resort Park. Julie Wade (left) counselor in Somerset, Todd Hines (center), job placement specialist in Richmond, and Robin Ritter (right), job placement services coordinator, were the principal planners of the training. Julie and Todd were also presenters.

Personnel Changes

Information submitted by Carmen Freeman and Susie Edwards

New Employees

Alisha Mills	February 1
Jeanette Newberry	February 2
Kari Porvance	February 16
Kathy Jones	April 1

Promotions/Transfers

Brad Mills	March 16
Pat Selch	March 16

Retirements/Resignations

Sue Elliott	February 16
Joyce R. Wood	February 28
Taylor Carter	March 31

SET I Training Participants

*Orientation for New Employees Held
March 23 - 25*



Get to Know Your Council Members

Lois Taurman and Vanessa Denham



Lois Taurman

Lois Taurman was appointed to the Council in the fall of 2007. Lois is both a nurse and an attorney. She has worked at the Kentucky Regional Poison Control Center at Kosair's Children Hospital since 1988 and has maintained her own law practice since 1999. Lois has a Bachelor's degree in Biology and a nursing degree from Bellarmine

College (now University) and a Master's degree in Education from the University of Louisville. She graduated *cum laude* from the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville in 1997.

An accomplished athlete, Lois played basketball, softball and volleyball while an undergraduate at Bellarmine. She finished her basketball career there as the school's all-time leading scorer in women's basketball. After her accident in 1983, she took up wheelchair racing and competed in the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul, South Korea. She has competed as a wheelchair fencer in Hungary, Poland, and Spain and at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney, Australia.



Vanessa Denham

Vanessa Denham is the representative on the Council from the Kentucky Client Assistance Program (KyCAP). KyCAP advocates for persons with disabilities who are applicants or clients of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), Office for the

Blind (OFB), Independent Living Centers (ILC) or any other programs mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Vanessa serves as the program coordinator and advocate for KyCAP. Previously she worked for three years for the Office for the Blind (OFB).

Of her job at KyCAP and her role in the Council, Vanessa says: "Working with KyCAP for the past six months has been a very rewarding experience. The (OVR and OFB) counselors I have worked with so far and the members of the council are so dedicated to the wellbeing of all persons with disabilities. I am glad to know that our programs exist so that we can make changes in the lives of those we serve."

Vanessa was born in Lexington, but grew up in Versailles and has spent most of her life there. She has two sons, Joshua and Matthew and a daughter, Missihia. She is currently pursuing a degree in Business Administration online at Everest University.

Save the Date

Upcoming Council Meetings

Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) Meeting

Monday June 8, 2009

9:00-3:30

Marriott Griffin Gate Resort and Spa

1800 Newtown Pike

Lexington, KY 40511

Tentative Meeting Dates for 2009:

September 14

December 14

Locations to be determined.



SCVR Council member, Terry Shockley attends the 874K event in Frankfort,

The OVR Review is a publication of the Kentucky Office for Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or marital status in employment, or provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all program activities.

(Dave Matheis - Content Editor, Nanci Shelden - Layout Editor)

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